



## **Athlete Profile (Local)**

**Mark Shepherd**  
**Army Vietnam Veteran**  
**56 years old**  
**Colorado Springs, Colorado**

Mark Shepherd did not let his injuries, sustained in a 1986 motor vehicle accident, stop him. An accident that could have deterred many people was, instead, one part of a journey that led to high levels of achievement.

While undergoing rehab in Vallejo, California, Shepherd was introduced to Sports N' Spokes Magazine, a publication of Paralyzed Veterans of America that highlights wheelchair sports. Sparking an interest, reading the publication eventually led him to participate in the 1988 National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

Shepherd has returned to the Games a dozen times since, and has taken his competitive interests to an international stage. Shepherd was an alternate for the 1982 Paralympics and a bronze medalist in Men's Wheelchair Basketball in 1992. He was also a three-time world champion for the U.S.A. in Men's Wheelchair Basketball in 1994, 1998 and 2002.

He has also gone on to write a book titled "Getting Back in the Game – How to regain your life after disability."

The Wheelchair Games are celebrating their 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and Shepherd is excited the event is coming to Denver. He hopes the Games will provide a better disabled awareness to the city and encourage continued support for our Veterans. Shepherd has a hand in planning the Games as well since he serves as Executive Director of the Mountain States Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America.

**"Life is what you make of it, not what it makes of you," Shepherd says. "The only defeat lies in not making an attempt."**